



A. M. D. G.

FIRST NATIONAL
CATHOLIC THEATRE
C O N F E R E N C E

LOYOLA COMMUNITY THEATRE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JUNE 15 AND 16, 1937

UNDER THE PATRONAGE
HIS EMINENCE
GEORGE CARDINAL MUNDELEIN
ARCHBISHOP OF CHICAGO

A general invitation to participate is extended to all Catholic institutions and to all Catholic Theatre groups: the parish theatres, the college theatres, the workers' theatres. To all others who cherish the Catholic tradition in the theatres, whether Catholics themselves or not, the same invitation is also extended.

P L A N A N D P U R P O S E

MR. EMMET LAVERY, who initiated this movement, clearly defines its purpose in his article in *AMERICA* on March 6, 1937. "The conference is an open conference in every sense of the word. . . . Our plans are simple but adequate. No complex organization is contemplated. No interference with parish, college and workers' theatres is proposed. No endowment is sought and no funds are solicited. But we do hope to inventory our mutual interests and experiences to the greater advantage of the common good. We hope to find, perhaps, in each single theatre group that Catholic Theatre for which so many of us once looked on Broadway. We seek simply a unity of effort which should in time produce a theatre with a culture as definite as that of the Yiddish Art Theatre, and a variety as extensive as that of the Federal Theatre. We aspire neither to undermine nor to overthrow the legitimate theatre. We aim merely to give new life and purpose to what should be one of the most vigorous tributary streams of the great world of the theatre."

For further explanation read Mr. Lavery's articles in *AMERICA*, December 5, 1936, and March 6, 1937.

A R R A N G E M E N T S

INSPIRED by the above articles, the Board of Directors of the Loyola Community Theatre offered to sponsor the meeting, put their theatre and staff at the disposal of the conference, and assume the initial expense of contacting every parish, college and workers' little theatre group in the country. This announcement is the first step in that direction.

As hosts for those attending the conference the Board of Directors will have committees in charge of all local arrangements, such as reservations at hotels or institutions, and other information and accommodations. Persons planning to attend should send their announcements to the Loyola Community Theatre, 6559 Glenwood Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, as soon as possible. A circular giving detailed information and directions will be mailed to them.



FIRST NATIONAL CATHOLIC THEATRE CONFERENCE

LOYOLA COMMUNITY THEATRE
1320 LOYOLA AVENUE · CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

JUNE 15 AND 16, 1937

Tentative Program of the Conference

FOR USE OF THE DELEGATES. SUBJECT TO CHANGE OR MODIFICATION.

TUESDAY, JUNE 15, 1937 · *Morning Session, 10:00*

1. Welcome of the delegates on behalf of the Loyola Community Theatre by the moderator, Rev. F. G. Dinneen, S. J.
2. Invocation and Greeting by a representative of His Eminence, George Cardinal Mundelein, Patron of the Conference.
3. Installation of Mr. Emmet Lavery as permanent chairman with a brief address on the purpose and plans of the Conference.
4. Keynote address by Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S. J., "The Possibilities of the Catholic Theatre."
5. Brief general field reports summarized by leaders in each field of dramatic activity at call of the chair:
 - a. Work in the colleges.
 - b. Work in the parishes.
 - c. Work in special or little theatre groups.
6. Condensation of special reports by chairman, reading of messages, and report of Executive Committee, discussion of a plan for subconferences and their operation. Adjournment for lunch.

(An elaborate PLAY EXHIBIT will be arranged in connection with the Conference with booths set up for displays of whatever may be helpful in the presentation of plays, such as texts of the best Catholic plays or those suitable for production; collections from various colleges and institutions of programs, sketches, photographs, models, etc.; commercial exhibits of costumes, model stages, scenery, lighting, make-up materials, etc. This exhibit may be inspected during intermissions or any time desired.)

Afternoon Session, 1:30

THE GENERAL OBJECTIVES for the study and consideration of the Conference, as suggested by the Advisory Committee, are as follows:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. PLAY WRITING | 3. PLAY PRODUCTION |
| 2. PLAY SELECTION | 4. PLAY LISTING |

In what way these comprehensive topics may be taken up to the best advantage and to what extent in this two-day conference must be left to the determination of the delegates at this first afternoon session. Committees and subconferences have been suggested. Others urge only plenary sessions. For pre-conference study of all that is involved in these topics an addenda of subdivisions is placed at the end of this program.

Mid-Afternoon Recess and Session

ORGANIZATION, NATIONAL AND REGIONAL: For lasting results some form of permanent organization must be worked out. The following outline is submitted to the delegates: (1) A national organization with strict determination of its purposes and officers; (2) the setting up of regional associations; (3) the establishment of a permanent executive with facilities for the collection and dissemination of information; (4) standing committees for the study of vital problems; (5) publication or bulletin. After general discussion and suggestions a committee should be appointed to draft a plan of organization and report at the Wednesday meeting.

SYMPOSIUM. Evening Session, 8:15

- "Drama in the News," Rev. Francis X. Talbot, S. J., Editor of *America*.
"Theatre Festivals in England," Mary Agnes Doyle, Goodman Theatre, Chicago.
"Blackfriars in Washington," Rev. Urban Nagle, O. P., Catholic University.
"Catholic Repertory Theatre," Dr. John H. Mahoney, New York.
"College Dramatics," Rev. George Stemm, Columbia College, Dubuque.
Mr. Emmet Lavery presiding.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 16, 1937 · *Morning Session, 9:30*

Morning and afternoon sessions will be devoted to hammering out the various ideas and plans presented on the previous day and to the final adoption of a constitution and by-laws for the permanent organization. All committees appointed for round table discussions and subconferences will present their reports and recommendations.

DEMONSTRATION PLAYS. *Afternoon and Evening, 3:00, 8:00*

1. Puppet Play by students of Marygrove College, Detroit.
2. Scene from an Original Play, *Jeanne d'Arc*, by Verse Speaking Choir, Mundelein College, under direction of Sister Mary Leola, B. V. M.
3. Radio Play by the students of Rosary College, under the direction of Sister Mary Peter, O. P.
4. *The Monsignor*, a one-act peace play by Emmet Lavery, presented by the Loyola Community Theatre, under the direction of Charles S. Costello.

Addenda

The following outline of comprehensive topics is added to the tentative program of the Conference as a stimulating and suggestive study of all the possibilities implied in the Catholic Theatre Movement. It is clearly impossible to do full justice to them in a two-day conference. But they may help to rouse the delegates to a fuller realization of the tremendous scope and possibilities of the Catholic Theatre and give added inspiration for striving toward their realization down through the years to come.

1. PLAY WRITING:

- a. Plays explicitly Catholic.
- b. Plays implicitly Catholic.
- c. Plays not Catholic at all but not incompatible with Catholic tradition.
- d. Techniques to be used:
 1. Kind of instruction available.
 2. Kind of instruction desired.
 3. Methods used by contemporaries.
 4. Opportunities for English departments of colleges. How many permit students to major in drama? How many plan some day to offer M. A. in drama?
- e. Catholic plays and social justice.

2. PLAY SELECTION:

- a. Clear recognition of right of author to fair royalties.
- b. Problems of women's colleges.
- c. Problems of men's colleges.
- d. Problems of parish groups—workers' groups.
- e. Wise use of men in women's college plays and women in men's college plays.
- f. General raising of standards:
 1. Why don't we do better comedies, better melodramas?
 2. Distinguishing good Passion plays from those not worth doing.
- g. The question of children's plays:
 1. Should children be in the casts or in the audience?
 2. If on stage, what type of plays?
- h. Our neglect of old morality and liturgical plays.
- i. The right plays for adolescents.
- j. Consideration of methods of Federal Theatre, New Theatre League (Communist), and little theatres in this country and abroad.

3. PLAY PRODUCTION:

- a. The theatre as a laboratory.
- b. Relation of pageantry to liturgy.
- c. Place of choric drama in modern theatre.
- d. Relation of pageantry to historical drama.
- e. Modern forms and the Catholic Theatre.
- f. The need for workers' theatres.
- g. Practical box-office and promotional problems of parish and college theatres.
- h. Problems of design.

- i. Availability of directors.
- j. Uses of radio (special subconference on this field if warranted).
- k. Specialized experience of Blackfriars.

4. PLAY LISTING:

- a. Comparisons of informal listings now available.
- b. Additions to informal listings now available.
- c. Methods of making those listings available throughout country:
 - 1. Constant co-operation of librarians.
 - 2. Regular issue of simple bulletin from national headquarters.
- d. Inquiries into collective action:
 - 1. How many groups have ever done the same play the same season by previous agreement.
 - 2. Study of methods of New Theatre (Communist) League.
- e. Use of Federal Theatre's compilation of plays Catholic in interest.

5. ORGANIZATION—NATIONAL, REGIONAL, LOCAL

- a. Administrative questions:
 - 1. Nature of association-headquarters.
 - 2. Centralization of standards.
 - 3. Decentralization of methods.
 - 4. Use of monthly mimeographed bulletin.
 - 5. Use of regional meetings in North, South, East, and West.
 - 6. Preservation of local initiative.
- b. Specific techniques:
 - 1. Use of annual regional drama festivals.
 - 2. More drama majors in English departments.
 - 3. Courses leading to M. A. in drama.
 - 4. Collective regional action: more groups doing more of the best plays the same season.
 - 5. Field work in parish drama by colleges.
 - 6. Field work in workers' theatres by colleges.
 - 7. Assumption of regional responsibility by leading colleges.
 - 8. The place of play writing prizes—if any.
 - 9. Opportunity for Catholic play anthology.
 - 10. Clearing house for worth-while new plays—simultaneous productions same season as reasonable substitute for fellowships in drama.
- c. Co-operation with movements abroad:
 - 1. Possibility of International Catholic Theatre Conference next year.
 - 2. Study of methods of Gheon's Companions of Notre Dame.
 - 3. The strength of Catholic drama on the Continent.

(Many interesting features of the Catholic Theatre movement and possible demonstrations have been suggested and urged for consideration which cannot be listed in this advanced outline of program. These will be left for more definite arrangement as the Conference convenes.)

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

THE FOLLOWING leading spirits in the Catholic Theatre movement have agreed to act on the Advisory Committee in response to Mr. Lavery's invitation and to take a leading part in the conference.

Emmet Lavery, <i>Chairman</i>	Rev. Edward Carrigan, S. J.
Rev. Daniel A. Lord, S. J.	Mrs. Christopher Wyatt
R. Dana Skinner	Rev. T. J. Coughlin, S. J.
Charles S. Costello	Rev. F. X. Talbot, S. J.
Rev. Urban Nagel, O. P.	Una O'Connor
Katharine Bregy	Dr. William Lamers
Pedro de Cordoba	Mary Agnes Doyle
Helen C. White	Norman J. Griffin
Grenville Vernon	Joseph Rice
Ward Clark	Melita Skillen
Rev. F. G. Dinneen, S. J.	Walter F. Kerr
Mary Benjamin	Sister Mary Leola, B. V. M.
Johanna Doniat	Rev. Edward Roberts Moore
Sister Mary Peter	Rev. Edward F. Leonard
William Callahan	Sterns Cunningham
Rev. James J. Mertz, S. J.	Rev. Arthur Spearman, S. J.
Mary F. Kiely	Rev. John H. Mahoney, D. D.
Sister Mary Donatus, C. I. M.	Rev. Paul Speckbaugh, C. PP. S.
Sister M. Flaget	Rev. George Stemm
Rev. F. X. Downey, S. J.	Rev. I. J. Semper
Rev. Matthias Helfen	Rev. Ferdinand Schoberg, S. J.
Rev. John McLarney, O. P.	Madeline Glynn
Sister Mary Josephine	Cecilia Mary Young
Rev. Terrence Connolly, S. J.	Rev. Peter Moran, C. S. P.
Mrs. J. V. Fuller	Rev. John F. Quinn, S. J.
Belle M. Mullins	J. Leo Sullivan
Rev. A. J. Kuhlman, S. J.	

TENTATIVE PROGRAM

It is of the utmost importance to have a program for the conference that will produce the most practical and constructive result and establish the right kind of a permanent organization. The members of the program committee are diligently planning for this. The following has been tentatively suggested for the first day:

1. An introductory talk on the purposes of the meeting.
2. A keynote talk on the possibilities of the Catholic Theatre.
3. A brief check-up on what is being done by the groups represented.

After that it is planned to hear briefly and concisely from the members of the Advisory Committee who have volunteered to discuss the essential phases of dramatic activity and influence. Then to set up the following committees: (1) On play writing, (2) on play selection, (3) on drawing up of Catholic lists, (4) on play production, (5) on permanent organization and promotion of the movement in different regions.

After hearing the reports of these and other possible committees, the program will be sufficiently elastic to bring in other considerations, such as radio, films, and so forth, if so desired. Group conferences will be arranged for different sections interested in various phases of little theatre activities and play production. It has been strongly urged that the reading of long formal papers be discouraged.

The program for the second day will naturally be shaped up by the activities of the first day and the reports of the various committees.

The prospects are that the evening sessions will be given over to short demonstrations along dramatic and entertainment lines. Groups will be selected with a view to showing the wide diversity of talent and possibilities in our institutions, parishes and dramatic organizations.

An important feature will be an exhibit of plays from Catholic sources or particularly suited for production. An important object of the conference is to encourage the writing of plays. Playwrights are invited to contribute to the exhibit. It is hoped that a bureau of information and play service along with an anthology of Catholic plays may result.

